

Message Text

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17

ACTION ARA-10

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7953

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 8301

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT EC

SUBJECT: ADMIRAL POVEDA'S VIEWS ON SITUATION OF THE PRESENT
GOVERNMENT

1. DURING THE COURSE OF A CONVERSATION ON NOVEMBER 13 WITH
VICE ADMIRAL POVEDA, HEAD OF THE NAVY, CHIEF OF JOINT STAFF,
AND FORMER MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT, I ASKED HIM WHAT HE THOUGHT
THE SITUATION OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT WAS. I SAID THAT I
WAS GOING TO WASHINGTON NEXT WEEK FOR A CHIEFS OF MISSION
CONFERENCE, AND THAT THERE WOULD BE INTEREST IN THIS SUBJECT
THERE.

2. THE ADMIRAL SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THINGS WERE GRADUALLY
COMING UNDER CONTROL AFTER THE SEPTEMBER 1 COUP ATTEMPT.
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THAT ATTEMPT, HE SAID, THERE HAD BEEN
ALL KINDS OF RUMORS, AND UNDERSTANDABLE INCLINATION TO BELIEVE
THE RUMORS, AND A CERTAIN NERVOUSNESS ON THE PART OF THE
PUBLIC. IT WAS ALSO A FACT, HE SAID, THAT SOME OFFICIALS
WHO HAD BEEN CONNECTED WITH THE COUP AND WHO HAD BEEN
DISMISSED FROM THE SERVICES HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH
CERTAIN OF THEIR COLLEAGUES IN THE ARMED FORCES: IN
SOME INSTANCES THEIR APPROACHES HAD BEEN REJECTED, IN
OTHERS THEY HAD BEEN LISTENED TO AND THEIR APPROACHES
REPORTED TO THE GOVERNMENT, AND HE ASSUMED THAT
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IN OTHER INSTANCES THEIR APPROACHES FELL ON SYMPA-

THETIC EARS AND THE GOE HAD NOT HEARD ABOUT THEM.

3. NEVERTHELESS, POVEDA SAID, HE THOUGHT THAT THE RUMORS WERE ABATING AND THAT THE SITUATION WAS SLOWLY COMING UNDER CONTROL. UNITY HAD NOT YET BEEN COMPLETELY RESTORED WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES--HE REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO THE TRAUMATIC EFFECT ON THE ARMY OF THE SEPTEMBER 1 REVOLT--BUT IT WAS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING RESTORED.

4. TURNING THEN TO THE NATIONWIDE STRIKE THEN IN PROGRESS, THE ADMIRAL ASKED ME WHETHER I HAD SEEN THE REPLY MADE BY THE MINISTER OF LABOR TO THE STRIKERS' DEMANDS. I SAID THAT I HAD, AND THAT IT SEEMED TO ME TO HAVE BEEN A REASONABLE ONE. THE ADMIRAL SAID THAT IT WAS IN FACT A "CAUTIOUS" REPLY AND WAS SO INTENDED. HE SAID THAT WHILE MOST OF THE LABOR LEADERS WERE OF LEFTIST PERSUASION AND WISHED THE GOVERNMENT TO NATIONALIZE EVERYTHING IN SIGHT, THIS WAS NOT THE POLICY NOR WOULD IT BE THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE GOE COULD, HOWEVER, GO A CERTAIN WAY IN ACCOMMODATING OTHER DEMANDS OF LABOR. THUS, IN MEETING THIS TWELVE HOUR STRIKE THE GOE HAD ADOPTED A POLICY OF MODERATION BOTH IN ITS REPLY AND IN THE MEASURES IT WAS TAKING TO CONTROL THE SITUATION. IF, HOWEVER, A STRIKE OF LONGER DURATION WERE TO BE PROPOSED, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD ADOPT DIFFERENT MEASURES.

5. AS FOR THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF, POVEDA SAID, IT WAS NEITHER RIGHT NOR LEFT IN ITS PHILOSOPHY. IT WAS "NATIONALISTIC". HE ALLUDED BRIEFLY AT THIS POINT TO THE POSSIBILITY OF FORMING A "NATIONALIST" PARTY. REFERRING BRIEFLY TO PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ LARA, POVEDA SAID THAT HE WAS FOLLOWING A CAUTIOUS BUT FIRM POLICY AND THAT HE THOUGHT THAT HE WAS CONSOLIDATING HIS SUPPORT AGAIN.

BREWSTER

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